



June 2009

District C - Pennsylvania FSA

-- To skip directly to the newsletter for your county, move your mouse to the servicing County Office on the list below and left-click.

Berks
Bucks / Montgomery
Columbia / Montour
Lancaster
Lebanon
Northumberland
Schuylkill
Snyder / Union



June 2009

Berks County FSA News

Berks County USDA Service Center

Berks County FSA
Suite 240
1238 County Welfare Rd
Leesport PA 19533-9710

610-478-7158 phone
610-371-8640 fax
www.fsa.usda.gov/pa

Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

County Committee

Calvin Beekman
James R Dietrich
Martin Moyer
Diane Hartman

Staff

Theresa M Tracey, CED
Donna Kline, PT
Kathryn Grube, PT
Rose Markowicz, PT
Bruce Brown, FLM
Kevin Lusch, FLO
Patricia Quillman, PT
Amy Hamm, PT



Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL)

Loans on new farm storage structures are available through your local FSA Office. Eligible structures include grain bins, silos, and handling equipment. To be eligible for these 7 year loans, you must have a need for additional storage and you must grow an eligible crop. A satisfactory credit history is required and you must demonstrate the ability to repay the debt. The interest rate for May 2009 is 2.375 percent. Contact your county office for additional details.

DCP Signup Extended

Signup for the 2009 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment (DCP) Program has been extended until August 14, 2009. FSA will not accept any late-filed applications.

FSA computes DCP Program payments using base acres and payment yields established for each farm. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. For 2009, you may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment for each commodity associated with the farm. FSA will issue advance direct payments later this month. Counter-cyclical payment rates vary depending on market prices and are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is statutorily set below its target price.

The electronic DCP (or eDCP) service will save you time, reduce paperwork and speed up contract processing at FSA offices. It is available to anyone eligible to participate in the DCP Program. To access this on-line service, you must have an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account, which requires filling out an online registration form at <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov> followed by a visit to the local USDA Service Center for identity verification.

ACRE Signup is Ongoing

The Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program signup began April 27, 2009, and runs through August 14, 2009. The ACRE alternative provides eligible producers a state-level revenue guarantee, based on the 5-year state Olympic average yield and the 2-year national average price.

Commodities eligible for ACRE payments are wheat, corn, grain sorghum, barley, oats, upland cotton, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, peanuts, soybeans, sunflower seed, canola, flaxseed, safflower, mustard seed, rapeseed, sesame seed, crambe, dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas and large chickpeas.

The ACRE program was created to give producers an option in lieu of traditional counter-cyclical payments. Producers may elect and enroll in ACRE for the 2009 crop year even if they have already accepted advance direct payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program.

GIS

As part of a program to digitally map the nation's farms and fields, the USDA has established the Common Land Unit (CLU) as a standardized GIS (Geographic Information Systems) data layer that has allowed mapping to be integrated easily on a nationwide basis. FSA manages this CLU data layer through a distributed database environment for all field service centers through out the country.

Transitioning to CLU certification has improved communication between Service Centers and FSA customers through the use of ortho-photography or NAIP (National Agricultural Imagery Program). Service Centers use NAIP imagery to maintain the Common Land Unit (CLU) boundaries and assist with a multitude of other farm programs.

Using GIS and GPS (Global Positioning System) provides for more consistent and more accurate land measurements, such as field acreage and acreage boundaries of conservation practices, such as riparian buffers. With high quality digital imagery, new land use changes (farm transfers and land subdivisions) can be easily updated. Maps can be created in either paper or digital format for FSA customers or the public. The GIS environment provides for the incorporation of data from outside sources for business decision making or environmental planning. Some examples of outside data sources include demographic data, satellite imagery, GPS data, elevation data and soil types.

More information about the CLU and NAIP imagery can be found by visiting on-line, APFO (Aerial Photography Field Office) at www.apfo.usda.gov.

Commodity Loans

Need money for operating expenses? You may use your harvested crop as collateral to obtain a 9-month loan. To be eligible for loan, you must have grown the crop and retain control of and title to the eligible commodity while the commodity is under loan. You are responsible for maintaining the quality and quantity of the commodity and obtaining permission from the county office prior to moving or selling the grain.

New Commodity Loan Repayment Rates

Since April 15, FSA began using an improved and more stable system for determining non-recourse marketing assistance loan repayment rates and loan deficiency payment rates for wheat, feed grains, pulse crops, oilseeds, wool, mohair and honey.

The new method reduces the effects daily market volatilities have on loan repayment rates, and provides more certainty for producers who have taken advantage of marketing assistance loans or loan deficiency payments.

The loan repayment rate may now be determined as the **lesser** of the loan rate plus interest and a rate based on: 1) average market prices during the previous 30 days, or 2) an alternative method the secretary may develop.

Beginning April 15, 2009, for wheat, corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, barley, oats, canola, flaxseed and sunflower seed, the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) determines and publishes daily loan repay-

ment rates based on the average market prices during the preceding 30 days. At the same time, CCC will announce each day a repayment rate based on the preceding five days. The new method will replace the current one, which is based on the previous day's market rates. **The effective alternative repayment rate will be the lower of either the 30-day average or the 5-day average.**

The 30-day method will reflect a 30-day moving average of all terminal market prices for the crop, adjusted by the difference between the applicable national loan rate and the county loan rate. The 5-day method will reflect a 5-day moving average of applicable terminal market prices adjusted by applicable county differential and terminal adjustments.

This new loan repayment method will minimize potential forfeitures, accumulation of CCC stocks, CCC storage costs, market impediments and discrepancies in benefits across state and county boundaries. More details are available at your county FSA office.

Crop Reporting

The annual, timely and accurate reporting of acres for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of Farm Service Agency programs. All cropland on the farm must be reported to receive benefits from the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program, marketing assistance loans and Loan Deficiency Payments.

Conservation Reserve Program acreage must be reported to receive annual rental payments. And, crop acreage for Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must also be reported.

Crop reports, form FSA-578, Report of Acreage, must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. Producers need to file their acreage reports by June 15th for small grains. All other crop reports must be filed by July 15th.

Prevented Planting:

Prevented planting needs be reported no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date.

Failed Acreage:

Reports of failed acreage must be filed before disposition of the crop, and producers must be able to establish to the satisfaction of the county committee that the crop failed and was prevented from being replanted through the normal planting period because of natural disaster conditions.

Pulse Crops

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 states eligible pulse crop acres may be added as base acres.

The addition of pulse crop base acres is:

- effective for 2009 through 2012 crop years
- required to be calculated in the same manner as eligible oilseed acreage under the 2002 Farm Bill.

The calculation of pulse crop base acres and yield is based on the acreage and yield history from the 1998 through 2001 crop years. Pulse crops are defined as:

- dry peas (green, yellow, Austrian, Umatilla, and wrinkled); intended uses must be Seed or Dry Edible.
- Lentils; any intended use.
- large chickpeas (Kabuli garbanzo beans); any intended use.
- small chickpeas (Desi garbanzo beans); any intended use.

Pulse crop base acres will only be eligible for counter-cyclical or Acreage Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) payments for 2009 through 2012 crop years. Direct payments will not be eligible.

Producers with current pulse crop acre history in 1998 through 2001 will be notified of the opportunity to update pulse crop base acres to their farm using one of three options. Producers must also provide verifiable and acceptable production evidence to support the calculated average farm yield for each pulse crop. The deadline for pulse crop base acres and yield election is August 14, 2009.

Producers that did not file acreage reports on pulse crops in 1998 through 2001, may now provide a late-filed acreage report at no charge. Acceptable evidence of the existence and disposition of the crop is required: Late-file prevented planting provisions for 1998 through 2001 pulse crops also apply.

Measurement Service

Farmers who would like a guarantee on their crop plantings and land use acreages can make it official by using the FSA measurement service. Producers must file a request with the county office staff and pay the cost of a field visit to have stake and referencing done on the farm. Measurement service is available using digital imagery and where an on-site visit is not required are charged at a reduced rate.

Incorrect acreage self-certification can result in reduced program payments, penalty, or loss of eligibility.

Producers can request ortho-imagery and CLU covering their land (commonly referred to as a clip) at no charge. This would provide the acreage of an entire field.

Farm Reconstitutions

At FSA, farms are “constituted” to group all tracts having the same owner and the same operator under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution is necessary. If an owner or operator can not agree about program participation, like in the case of the new ACRE program, then producers should inquire about a reconstitution of the farm at the local FSA office.

The reconstitution—or recon—is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. Remember, to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by **August 1** for farms enrolled in specific programs.

2009 County Committee Elections

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency county committees is important to ALL farmers and ranchers, whether beginning or long-established, with large or small operations. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

County committee members are a critical component of the operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers and ranchers who serve on county committees help with the decisions necessary to administer the programs in their counties. County committees provide local input on:

- Commodity price support loans and payments
- Conservation programs
- Incentive, indemnity and disaster payments for some commodities
- Emergency programs
- Payment eligibility

FSA county committees operate within official regulations to carry out federal laws. County committee members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions.

Election Period

June 15, 2009 – The nomination period begins. Request nomination forms (FSA 669A) from the local USDA Service Center or obtain online at:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA> under News & Events/County Committee Elections.

Aug. 3, 2009 - Last day to file nomination forms

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Jan. 1, 2010 - Newly elected county committee members take office

Who Can Hold Office

To hold office a person must meet the basic eligibility criteria.

- Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA
- Be eligible to vote in a county committee election
- Reside in the LAA in which a candidate

Not have been:

- Removed or disqualified from the office of county committee member, alternate or employee
- Removed for cause from any public office or have been convicted of fraud, larceny, embezzlement or any other felony
- Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services.

LAA(s) up for Election

| County Committee Elections | | |
|----------------------------|-----|---------------|
| County | LAA | Townships |
| Berks | 3 | Maxatawny |
| | | Longswamp |
| | | Hereford |
| | | Rockland |
| | | District |
| | | Pike |
| | | Washington |
| | | Colebrookdale |
| | | Earl |
| | | Oley |
| | | Alsace |
| | | Lower Alsace |
| | | Exeter |
| | | Amity |
| | | Douglass |
| Union | | |
| Robeson | | |
| Caernarvon | | |

To read more about the 2009 County Committee elections, visit the Pennsylvania FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/pa.

BERKS COUNTY FAIR DATES:

- Kempton Fair - June 16-20
- Reading Fair - August 3- 8
- Kutztown Fair - August 10-16
- Oley Fair - September 17-19

BARN

The Berks Agricultural Resource Network (B.A.R.N.) was formed in 2008 as a non-profit organization to serve the Berks County agricultural and related food industries and rural communities. One of the goals is to promote agriculture through economic development efforts, marketing, policy development, and education, recognizing that agriculture represents the entire food industry chain from farmer to consumer. For more information contact Berks Ag Co-ordinator Sheila Miller at 610-898-5482.

OPPORTUNITY FARMERS' MARKET

This is a joint effort between Opportunity House and BARN to bring fresh fruits and vegetables to limited income residents who may not have the means to visit other farmers' markets in the area. The market will be open every Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. until October 30, 2009. The location is 142 & 146 Beech St, Reading, PA.

| Dates to Remember | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Continuous | Continuous Conservation Reserve Program |
| May 4 thru May 29, 2009 | Requests for Referendum for Soybean Promotion |
| June 15, 2009 | COC nominations period opens |
| Aug. 14, 2009 | 2009 ACRE election & sign up deadline |
| Aug. 3, 2009 | Last day to file COC election nomination forms |
| Aug. 14, 2009 | DCP Signup Deadline |

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance programs. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202)-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."



June 2009

Bucks/Montgomery County FSA

News

Bucks/Montgomery County USDA Service Center

Bucks/Montgomery County FSA

1000 East Walnut St. Perkasie, PA 18944

215-453-9527 phone
215-453-9528 fax

www.fsa.usda.gov/pa

Hours

Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

County Committee

Darryl Knechel, Chairperson
Paul Hockman, Vice-Chairperson
I. Neil Anders, Member
Matthew Maximuck, Member
David Bishop, Member
Sharon Bishop, Advisor

Staff

Catherine Cosner, PT
Patricia McDermott, PT
Lindsey Stewart, PT
John Frederick, Field Assistant

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Not have been:

- Removed or disqualified from the office of county committee member, alternate or employee
- Removed for cause from any public office or have been convicted of fraud, larceny, embezzlement or any other felony
- Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services.

LAA(s) up for Election

| County Committee Elections | | |
|----------------------------|-----|---------------|
| County | LAA | Townships |
| Bucks | 3 | Hilltown |
| | | East Rockhill |
| | | West Rockhill |
| | | Milford |
| | | Richland |
| | | Springfield |

To read more about the 2009 County Committee elections, visit the Pennsylvania FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/pa.

Note that this area has been represented by Dairyman Paul Hockman for the past 3 years. Please help us generate a list of suitable candidates that you would like to represent your interests at the Farm Service Agency. We would like candidates from all areas of agricultural interest in 2009. Committee Members play a vital role in the administration of federal farm programs. County Committee Members are responsible for the selection and supervision of the County Executive Director (CED). Since our CED position is currently vacant we expect our Committee will be playing a vital role in this area in 2009.

Conservation News

The Conservation Reserve Program lives on in Bucks/Montgomery Counties. Continuous Signup applies to certain practices to be applied to environmentally sensitive areas. Producers can offer land located adjacent to streams, rivers, ponds or Lakes for planting of a riparian buffer. This practice requires the area devoted to the buffer to be planted to trees and shrubs. This practice can be applied to marginal pasture land. Other practices available on eligible cropland include sod waterways, filter strips, and contour buffer strips. There are some very good reasons to enroll: 1. FSA provides cost sharing (50%) to install the practices, including the components required to establish a successful buffer such as fencing to exclude cattle from the area. 2.. FSA pays a practice incentive payment of 40% of all eligible expenses on most continuous signup practices. 3. FSA provides participants on most continuous practices with a signup incentive payment of \$100.00 for each acre of land enrolled in this practice. 4. FSA will pay annual rental payments on the land covered by the practice for up to 15 years. FSA is convinced that the environmental benefits are profound on these practices and we think you will find the financial benefits useful as well.

PA is also participating in the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement Program (SAFE). SAFE provides the establishment of vernal pools for wildlife, planting trees and shrubs to establish wildlife habitat, and planting native grasses to enhance environmental benefits. There are restrictions to the number of acres which may be enrolled under this program and the practices are designed to be applied to eligible cropland. If interested in enrolling in SAFE you should contact the County Office as soon as possible.

Congress has reduced the amount of acreage available for the Conservation Reserve Program throughout the Country. This means we will probably not see an open signup period for enrollments in 2009. If you have an expiring contract you may be offered an extension varying in length dependent on the environmental benefits provided.

If you have any questions about any of the information included in this letter please contact the County Office.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance programs. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202)-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."



June 2009

Columbia/Montour FSA News

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Commodities eligible for ACRE payments are wheat, corn, grain sorghum, barley, oats, upland cotton, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, peanuts, soybeans, sunflower seed, canola, flaxseed, safflower, mustard seed, rapeseed, sesame seed, crambe, dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas and large chickpeas.

The ACRE program was created to give producers an option in lieu of traditional counter-cyclical payments. Producers may elect and enroll in ACRE for the 2009 crop year even if they have already accepted advance direct payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program.

GIS

As part of a program to digitally map the nation's farms and fields, the USDA has established the Common Land Unit (CLU) as a standardized GIS (Geographic Information Systems) data layer that has allowed mapping to be integrated easily on a nationwide basis. FSA manages this CLU data layer through a distributed database environment for all field service centers through out the country.

Transitioning to CLU certification has improved communication between Service Centers and FSA customers through the use of ortho-photography or NAIP (National Agricultural Imagery Program). Service Centers use NAIP imagery to maintain the Common Land Unit (CLU) boundaries and assist with a multitude of other farm programs.

Columbia/Montour County USDA Service Center

Columbia/Montour County FSA

702 Sawmill Road, Suite 202
Bloomsburg, PA 17815

Phone: 570-784-4722 ext. 2
Fax: 570-387-7715
www.fsa.usda.gov/pa

Hours

Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

County Committee

David Artman, Chairperson
Donnie Whitenight, Vice Chairperson
Randy Rhoads, Member
John Hartman, Member
Richard Woodruff, Member
Paula Weatherill, Advisor

Staff

Deanna Juart, CED
David Reedy, PT
Sondra Laubaugh, PT
Lillian Olshefski, PT

Field Assistants:

Gerald McCarty
Marlin Schock
Richard Miller



Using GIS and GPS (Global Positioning System) provides for more consistent and more accurate land measurements, such as field acreage and acreage boundaries of conservation practices, such as riparian buffers. With high quality digital imagery, new land use changes (farm transfers and land subdivisions) can be easily updated. Maps can be created in either paper or digital format for FSA customers or the public. The GIS environment provides for the incorporation of data from outside sources for business decision making or environmental planning. Some examples of outside data sources include demographic data, satellite imagery, GPS data, elevation data and soil types.

More information about the CLU and NAIP imagery can be found by visiting on-line, APFO (Aerial Photography Field Office) at www.apfo.usda.gov.

Commodity Loans

Need money for operating expenses? You may use your harvested crop as collateral to obtain a 9-month loan. To be eligible for loan, you must have grown the crop and retain control of and title to the eligible commodity while the commodity is under loan. You are responsible for maintaining the quality and quantity of the commodity and obtaining permission from the county office prior to moving or selling the grain.

New Commodity Loan Repayment Rates

Since April 15, FSA began using an improved and more stable system for determining non-recourse marketing assistance loan repayment rates and loan deficiency payment rates for wheat, feed grains, pulse crops, oilseeds, wool, mohair and honey.

The new method reduces the effects daily market volatilities have on loan repayment rates, and provides more certainty for producers who have taken advantage of marketing assistance loans or loan deficiency payments.

The loan repayment rate may now be determined as the **lesser** of the loan rate plus interest and a rate based on: 1) average market prices during the previous 30 days, or 2) an alternative method the secretary may develop.

Beginning April 15, 2009, for wheat, corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, barley, oats, canola, flaxseed and sunflower seed, the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) determines and publishes daily loan repay-

ment rates based on the average market prices during the preceding 30 days. At the same time, CCC will announce each day a repayment rate based on the preceding five days. The new method will replace the current one, which is based on the previous day's market rates. **The effective alternative repayment rate will be the lower of either the 30-day average or the 5-day average.**

The 30-day method will reflect a 30-day moving average of all terminal market prices for the crop, adjusted by the difference between the applicable national loan rate and the county loan rate. The 5-day method will reflect a 5-day moving average of applicable terminal market prices adjusted by applicable county differential and terminal adjustments.

This new loan repayment method will minimize potential forfeitures, accumulation of CCC stocks, CCC storage costs, market impediments and discrepancies in benefits across state and county boundaries. More details are available at your county FSA office.

Crop Reporting

The annual, timely and accurate reporting of acres for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of Farm Service Agency programs. All cropland on the farm must be reported to receive benefits from the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program, marketing assistance loans and Loan Deficiency Payments.

Conservation Reserve Program acreage must be reported to receive annual rental payments. And, crop acreage for Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must also be reported.

Crop reports, form FSA-578, Report of Acreage, must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. Producers need to file their acreage reports by June 15th for small grains. All other crop reports must be filed by July 15th. ***Late file fees will apply if producers do not meet these deadlines. There are no exceptions, so please report your acreage on time.***

Prevented Planting:

Prevented planting needs be reported no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date.

Failed Acreage:

Reports of failed acreage must be filed before disposition of the crop, and producers must be able to establish to the satisfaction of the county committee that the crop failed and was prevented from being replanted through the normal planting period because of natural disaster conditions.

USDA Enacts Changes to Payment Limitations, Income Qualifications and Implements Direct Attributions

USDA recently published an interim final regulation in the Federal Register announcing changes to both Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) qualifications, program payment limitations, and direct attribution for FSA and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs, which became effective in accordance with the 2008 Farm Bill.

For commodity and disaster programs, the AGI limitation was reduced from \$2.5 million AGI from all sources to a three-year average non-farm AGI of \$500,000 such that a person or entity shall not be eligible for such programs if the non-farm AGI exceeds \$500,000. Also, under the new regulations, an individual or entity must have a 3-year average AGI less than or equal to \$750,000 per year from farm income in order to qualify for direct payments issued under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program.

The definition of income derived from farming, ranching and forestry operations was expanded to include, among other items, such items as the packing, storing and transporting of agricultural commodities; production of livestock products; farm-based production of renewable bio-energy; and in some instances, the providing of operational inputs to farmers, ranchers and foresters. For conservation programs, the average non-farm AGI limitation is \$1 million or less for eligibility with allowances for certain exceptions.

All producers interested in earning new farm bill program benefits for the 2009 and succeeding years must file the new eligibility documentation. Please stop by the office and complete the required forms before program deadlines.

Measurement Service

Farmers who would like a guarantee on their crop plantings and land use acreages can make it official by using the FSA measurement service. Producers must file a request with the county office staff and pay the cost of a field visit to have stake and referencing done on the farm. Measurement service is available using digital imagery and where an on-site visit is not required are charged at a reduced rate.

Incorrect acreage self-certification can result in reduced program payments, penalty, or loss of eligibility. Producers can request ortho-imagery and CLU covering their land (commonly referred to as a clip) at no charge. This would provide the acreage of an entire field.

Farm Reconstitutions

At FSA, farms are “constituted” to group all tracts having the same owner and the same operator under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution is necessary. If an owner or operator can not agree about program participation, like in the case of the new ACRE program, then producers should inquire about a reconstitution of the farm at the local FSA office.

The reconstitution—or recon—is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. Remember, to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by **August 1** for farms enrolled in specific programs.

2009 County Committee Elections

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency county committees is important to ALL farmers and ranchers, whether beginning or long-established, with large or small operations. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

County committee members are a critical component of the operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers and ranchers who serve on county committees help with the decisions necessary to administer the programs in their counties. County committees provide local input on:

- Commodity price support loans and payments
- Conservation programs
- Incentive, indemnity and disaster payments for some commodities
- Emergency programs
- Payment eligibility

FSA county committees operate within official regulations to carry out federal laws. County committee members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions.

Election Period

June 15, 2009 – The nomination period begins. Request nomination forms (FSA 669A) from the local USDA Service Center or obtain online at:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA> under News & Events/County Committee Elections.

Aug. 3, 2009 - Last day to file nomination forms

Nov. 6, 2009 - Ballots mailed to eligible voters

Dec. 7, 2009 - Last day to return voted ballots to the USDA Service Center

Who Can Hold Office?

To hold office a person must meet the basic eligibility criteria.

- Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA
- Be eligible to vote in a county committee election
- Reside in the LAA in which a candidate

Not have been:

- Removed or disqualified from the office of county committee member, alternate or employee
- Removed for cause from any public office or have been convicted of fraud, larceny, embezzlement or any other felony
- Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services.

LAA(s) up for Election

| County Committee Elections | | |
|----------------------------|-----|-------------------------|
| County | LAA | Townships |
| Columbia | 2 | Madison, Hemlock, |
| | | Montour, Scott, Orange, |
| | | Mount Pleasant, |
| | | North & South Centre |
| | | Briar Creek & Berwick |
| Montour | 5 | Liberty, Valley, |
| | | Mahoning, Cooper |
| | | West Hemlock |
| | | Mayberry |

To read more about the 2009 County Committee elections, visit the Pennsylvania FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/pa.

Please help us develop a list of eligible candidates that you would like to represent your interests at the Farm Service Agency. Committee Members play a vital role in the administration of federal farm programs. So, please nominate and vote in the upcoming fall elections.

CONSERVATION NEWS

The Columbia/Montour County FSA office has been and will continue to spot check contracts enrolled in the CRP/CREP program. Noxious weeds, such as multiflora rose, Canadian thistle, Japanese knotweed, etc., must be controlled on all contract acres. In addition, in riparian buffer areas, tree tubes must be in an upright condition and netting removed at the appropriate time in order to ensure tree survival. Failure to perform maintenance on these acres may lead to reduced rental payments or even contract termination which requires the contract holder to refund all cost shares, annual rentals & incentives with interest along with liquidated damages. Maintenance must be performed on a regular basis to ensure the success of these practices.

The Conservation Reserve Program continues in Columbia & Montour Counties. Producers can offer land located adjacent to streams, rivers, ponds or lakes for planting of a riparian buffer. This practice requires the area devoted to the buffer to be planted to trees and shrubs.

Continuous signup for certain practices is open throughout the year. The practices eligible for enrollment include sod waterways, filter strips, and contour buffer strips. This program provides many of the benefits provided by the buffer practice shown above.

PA is also participating in the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement Program (SAFE). SAFE provides the establishment of vernal pools for wildlife, planting trees and shrubs to establish wildlife habitat, and planting native grasses to enhance environmental benefits. There are restrictions to the number of acres which may be enrolled under this program and the practices are designed to be applied to eligible cropland. If interested in enrolling in SAFE you should contact the County Office as soon as possible.

Congress has reduced the amount of acreage available for the Conservation Reserve Program throughout the Country. This means we will probably not see an open signup period for enrollments in 2009. If you have an expiring contract you may be offered an extension varying in length dependent on the environmental benefits provided.

If you have any questions about any of the information included in this letter please contact the County Office.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance programs. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202)-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."



June 2009

Lancaster FSA News

Lancaster County USDA Service Center

Lancaster County FSA
1383 Arcadia Rd.
Lancaster, PA 17601

717-397-6235
717-393-7289 FAX
www.fsa.usda.gov/pa

Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00 Am - 4:30 Pm

County Committee
Michael Brubaker, Ch.
Scott Kreider, V. Ch.
Tom Bollinger, Member
Robin Rohrer, Advisor

Staff
Kathy Heil, CED
Raeann Schatz, PT
Cyndi Snedden, PT
Keith Beattie, PT
Ben Parker, PT
Omer Brubaker, FA

Jim Tomanelli, FLM
Karl Hess, FLO
Tiffany Lutz, FLO
Fran Gruver, PT
Alex Brubaker, PT

June Interest Rates
Commodity Loans 1.5%
Facility Loans 2.625%



Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL)

Loans on new farm storage structures are available through your local FSA Office. Eligible structures include grain bins, silos, and handling equipment. To be eligible for these 7 year loans, you must have a need for additional storage and you must grow an eligible crop. A satisfactory credit history is required and you must demonstrate the ability to repay the debt. The interest rate for June 2009 is 2.625 percent. Contact your county office for additional details.

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Prevented Planting:

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Failed Acreage:

Reports of failed acreage must be filed before disposition of the crop, and producers must be able to establish to the satisfaction of the county committee that the crop failed and was prevented from being replanted through the normal planting period because of natural disaster conditions.

Pulse Crops

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 states eligible pulse crop acres may be added as base acres.

The addition of pulse crop base acres is:

- effective for 2009 through 2012 crop years
- required to be calculated in the same manner as eligible oilseed acreage under the 2002 Farm Bill.

The calculation of pulse crop base acres and yield is based on the acreage and yield history from the 1998 through 2001 crop years. Pulse crops are defined as:

- dry peas (green, yellow, Austrian, Umatilla, and wrinkled); intended uses must be Seed or Dry Edible.
- Lentils; any intended use.
- large chickpeas (Kabuli garbanzo beans); any intended use.
- small chickpeas (Desi garbanzo beans); any intended use.

Pulse crop base acres will only be eligible for counter-cyclical or Acreage Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) payments for 2009 through 2012 crop years. Direct payments will not be eligible.

Producers with current pulse crop acre history in 1998 through 2001 will be notified of the opportunity to update pulse crop base acres to their farm using one of three options. Producers must also provide verifiable and acceptable production evidence to support the calculated average farm yield for each pulse crop. The deadline for pulse crop base acres and yield election is August 14, 2009.

Producers that did not file acreage reports on pulse crops in 1998 through 2001, may now provide a late-filed acreage report at no charge. Acceptable evidence of the existence and disposition of the crop is required: Late-file prevented planting provisions for 1998 through 2001 pulse crops also apply.

Measurement Service

Farmers who would like a guarantee on their crop plantings and land use acreages can make it official by using the FSA measurement service. Producers must file a request with the county office staff and pay the cost of a field visit to have stake and referencing done on the farm. Measurement service is available using digital imagery and where an on-site visit is not required are charged at a reduced rate.

Incorrect acreage self-certification can result in reduced program payments, penalty, or loss of eligibility.

Producers can request ortho-imagery and CLU covering their land (commonly referred to as a clip) at no charge. This would provide the acreage of an entire field.

Farm Reconstitutions

At FSA, farms are “constituted” to group all tracts having the same owner and the same operator under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution is necessary. If an owner or operator can not agree about program participation, like in the case of the new ACRE program, then producers should inquire about a reconstitution of the farm at the local FSA office.

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2009 County Committee Elections

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency county committees is important to ALL farmers and ranchers, whether beginning or long-established, with large or small operations. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

County committee members are a critical component of the operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers and ranchers who serve on county committees help with the decisions necessary to administer the programs in their counties. County committees provide local input on:

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FSA county committees operate within official regulations to carry out federal laws. County committee members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions.

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Aug. 3, 2009 - Last day to file nomination forms

Nov. 6, 2009 - Ballots mailed to eligible voters

Dec. 7, 2009 - Last day to return voted ballots to the USDA Service Center

Jan. 1, 2010 - Newly elected county committee members take office

Who Can Hold Office

To hold office a person must meet the basic eligibility criteria.

- Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA
- Be eligible to vote in a county committee election
- Reside in the LAA in which a candidate

Not have been:

- Removed or disqualified from the office of county committee member, alternate or employee
- Removed for cause from any public office or have been convicted of fraud, larceny, embezzlement or any other felony
- Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services.

LAA(s) up for Election

| County Committee Elections | | |
|----------------------------|-----|---------------------------------------|
| County | LAA | Townships |
| Lancaster | 2 | Clay |
| | | E. Cocalico |
| | | W. Cocalico |
| | | Brecknock |
| | | Earl |
| | | E. Earl |
| | | W. Earl |
| | | Caernarvon |
| | | Ephrata |
| | | Leacock Upper Leacock Salisbury |

To read more about the 2009 County Committee elections, visit the Pennsylvania FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/pa.

Experience is knowing a lot of things you shouldn't do!

W.S. Knudsen

MILK INCOME LOSS CONTRACT (MILC)

Depressed milk prices are depressing! FSA has been providing some relief through the MILC program, starting in February. Milk producers may still enroll in the program and claim their entitlement for current and future benefits. Unfortunately, payments cannot be made retroactively. The program still uses \$16.94/cwt as the "target price". This target is flexible, however, when the feed ration cost exceeds \$7.35 for the month. The target moves higher for this adjustment. When the Boston Class I milk price falls below the flex target, a payment is triggered. 45% of the difference between the two is made once the adjustment is known. April's payment of \$1.58628 will be processed in June. When you enroll, you can choose the current month or a future month with some limitations. You may select a future month, provided the preliminary payment rate is unknown. Payments are limited to 2.985 million pounds per fiscal year ending September 30th. With the lag in the dairy industry's response to market supply and demand, this program may bridge the price swings for some stability to meet your credit obligations. Remember, these depressed prices are affecting a multitude of services - feed, veterinarian, financial, and implements. Including this program in your overall operating plan may spread the risk. I guess you can refer the MILC program as price drought relief.

| Dates to Remember | |
|-------------------|--|
| Continuous | Continuous Conservation Reserve Program |
| June 15, 2009 | Small Grain reporting |
| June 15, 2009 | COC nominations period opens |
| Aug. 14, 2009 | 2009 ACRE election & signup deadline |
| Aug. 3, 2009 | Last day to file COC election nomination forms |
| Aug. 14, 2009 | DCP Signup Deadline |

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June 2009

Lebanon FSA News

Lebanon County USDA Service Center

Lebanon County FSA
2120 Cornwall Road, Ste 3
Lebanon, PA 17042

717-272-3908 phone
717-274-0568 fax
www.fsa.usda.gov/pa

Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

County Committee

Jay Weaver, Chairman
Edward Heagy, V. Chair
Gerald Hoffer, Member
Laura Heilinger, Advisor

Staff

Julie Holland, CED
Dianne Younker, PT
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Field Assistants:
Troy Miller
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Katie Bomgardner



Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL)

Loans on new farm storage structures are available through your local FSA Office. Eligible structures include grain bins, silos, and handling equipment. To be eligible for these 7 year loans, you must have a need for additional storage and you must grow an eligible crop. A satisfactory credit history is required and you must demonstrate the ability to repay the debt. The interest rate for May 2009 is 2.375 percent. Contact your county office for additional details.

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Commodities eligible for ACRE payments are wheat, corn, grain sorghum, barley, oats, upland cotton, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, peanuts, soybeans, sunflower seed, canola, flaxseed, safflower, mustard seed, rapeseed, sesame seed, crambe, dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas and large chickpeas.

The ACRE program was created to give producers an option in lieu of traditional counter-cyclical payments. Producers may elect and enroll in ACRE for the 2009 crop year even if they have already accepted advance direct payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program.

GIS

As part of a program to digitally map the nation's farms and fields, the USDA has established the Common Land Unit (CLU) as a standardized GIS (Geographic Information Systems) data layer that has allowed mapping to be integrated easily on a nationwide basis. FSA manages this CLU data layer through a distributed database environment for all field service centers through out the country.

Transitioning to CLU certification has improved communication between Service Centers and FSA customers through the use of ortho-photography or NAIP (National Agricultural Imagery Program). Service Centers use NAIP imagery to maintain the Common Land Unit (CLU) boundaries and assist with a multitude of other farm programs.

Using GIS and GPS (Global Positioning System) provides for more consistent and more accurate land measurements, such as field acreage and acreage boundaries of conservation practices, such as riparian buffers. With high quality digital imagery, new land use changes (farm transfers and land subdivisions) can be easily updated. Maps can be created in either paper or digital format for FSA customers or the public. The GIS environment provides for the incorporation of data from outside sources for business decision making or environmental planning. Some examples of outside data sources include demographic data, satellite imagery, GPS data, elevation data and soil types.

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Commodity Loans

Need money for operating expenses? You may use your harvested crop as collateral to obtain a 9-month loan. To be eligible for loan, you must have grown the crop and retain control of and title to the eligible commodity while the commodity is under loan. You are responsible for maintaining the quality and quantity of the commodity and obtaining permission from the county office prior to moving or selling the grain.

New Commodity Loan Repayment Rates

Since April 15, FSA began using an improved and more stable system for determining non-recourse marketing assistance loan repayment rates and loan deficiency payment rates for wheat, feed grains, pulse crops, oilseeds, wool, mohair and honey.

The new method reduces the effects daily market volatilities have on loan repayment rates, and provides more certainty for producers who have taken advantage of marketing assistance loans or loan deficiency payments.

The loan repayment rate may now be determined as the **lesser** of the loan rate plus interest and a rate based on: 1) average market prices during the previous 30 days, or 2) an alternative method the secretary may develop.

Beginning April 15, 2009, for wheat, corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, barley, oats, canola, flaxseed and sunflower seed, the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) determines and publishes daily loan repay-

ment rates based on the average market prices during the preceding 30 days. At the same time, CCC will announce each day a repayment rate based on the preceding five days. The new method will replace the current one, which is based on the previous day's market rates. **The effective alternative repayment rate will be the lower of either the 30-day average or the 5-day average.**

The 30-day method will reflect a 30-day moving average of all terminal market prices for the crop, adjusted by the difference between the applicable national loan rate and the county loan rate. The 5-day method will reflect a 5-day moving average of applicable terminal market prices adjusted by applicable county differential and terminal adjustments.

This new loan repayment method will minimize potential forfeitures, accumulation of CCC stocks, CCC storage costs, market impediments and discrepancies in benefits across state and county boundaries. More details are available at your county FSA office.

Crop Reporting

The annual, timely and accurate reporting of acres for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of Farm Service Agency programs. All cropland on the farm must be reported to receive benefits from the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program, marketing assistance loans and Loan Deficiency Payments.

Conservation Reserve Program acreage must be reported to receive annual rental payments. And, crop acreage for Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must also be reported.

Crop reports, form FSA-578, Report of Acreage, must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. Producers need to file their acreage reports by June 15th for small grains. All other crop reports must be filed by July 15th.

Prevented Planting:

Prevented planting needs be reported no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date.

Failed Acreage:

Reports of failed acreage must be filed before disposition of the crop, and producers must be able to establish to the satisfaction of the county committee that the crop failed and was prevented from being replanted through the normal planting period because of natural disaster conditions.

Pulse Crops

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 states eligible pulse crop acres may be added as base acres.

The addition of pulse crop base acres is:

- effective for 2009 through 2012 crop years
- required to be calculated in the same manner as eligible oilseed acreage under the 2002 Farm Bill.

The calculation of pulse crop base acres and yield is based on the acreage and yield history from the 1998 through 2001 crop years. Pulse crops are defined as:

- dry peas (green, yellow, Austrian, Umatilla, and wrinkled); intended uses must be Seed or Dry Edible.
- Lentils; any intended use.
- large chickpeas (Kabuli garbanzo beans); any intended use.
- small chickpeas (Desi garbanzo beans); any intended use.

Pulse crop base acres will only be eligible for counter-cyclical or Acreage Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) payments for 2009 through 2012 crop years. Direct payments will not be eligible.

Producers with current pulse crop acre history in 1998 through 2001 will be notified of the opportunity to update pulse crop base acres to their farm using one of three options. Producers must also provide verifiable and acceptable production evidence to support the calculated average farm yield for each pulse crop. The deadline for pulse crop base acres and yield election is August 14, 2009.

Producers that did not file acreage reports on pulse crops in 1998 through 2001, may now provide a late-filed acreage report at no charge. Acceptable evidence of the existence and disposition of the crop is required: Late-file prevented planting provisions for 1998 through 2001 pulse crops also apply.

Measurement Service

Farmers who would like a guarantee on their crop plantings and land use acreages can make it official by using the FSA measurement service. Producers must file a request with the county office staff and pay the cost of a field visit to have stake and referencing done on the farm. Measurement service is available using digital imagery and where an on-site visit is not required are charged at a reduced rate.

Incorrect acreage self-certification can result in reduced program payments, penalty, or loss of eligibility.

Producers can request ortho-imagery and CLU covering their land (commonly referred to as a clip) at no charge. This would provide the acreage of an entire field.

Farm Reconstitutions

At FSA, farms are “constituted” to group all tracts having the same owner and the same operator under one farm serial number. When changes in ownership or operation take place, a farm reconstitution is necessary. If an owner or operator can not agree about program participation, like in the case of the new ACRE program, then producers should inquire about a reconstitution of the farm at the local FSA office.

The reconstitution—or recon—is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation. Remember, to be effective for the current year, recons must be requested by **August 1** for farms enrolled in specific programs.

2009 County Committee Elections

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency county committees is important to ALL farmers and ranchers, whether beginning or long-established, with large or small operations. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

County committee members are a critical component of the operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers and ranchers who serve on county committees help with the decisions necessary to administer the programs in their counties. County committees provide local input on:

- Commodity price support loans and payments
- Conservation programs
- Incentive, indemnity and disaster payments for some commodities
- Emergency programs
- Payment eligibility

FSA county committees operate within official regulations to carry out federal laws. County committee members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions.

Election Period

June 15, 2009 – The nomination period begins. Request nomination forms (FSA 669A) from the local USDA Service Center or obtain online at:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA> under News & Events/County Committee Elections.

Aug. 3, 2009 - Last day to file nomination forms

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Jan. 1, 2010 - Newly elected county committee members take office

Who Can Hold Office

To hold office a person must meet the basic eligibility criteria.

- Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA
- Be eligible to vote in a county committee election
- Reside in the LAA in which a candidate

Not have been:

- Removed or disqualified from the office of county committee member, alternate or employee
- Removed for cause from any public office or have been convicted of fraud, larceny, embezzlement or any other felony
- Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services.

LAA(s) up for Election

| County Committee Elections | | |
|----------------------------|-----|-------------------|
| County | LAA | Townships |
| Lebanon | 3 | North Cornwall |
| | | West Cornwall |
| | | Cornwall Borough |
| | | North Lebanon |
| | | South Lebanon |
| | | North Londonderry |
| | | South Londonderry |
| | | North Annville |
| | | South Annville |

To read more about the 2009 County Committee elections, visit the Pennsylvania FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/pa.

Note: To those who have not visited the office in the past six months, we have moved back down the hall into the office we were in before.

Appointments Requested

FSA is encouraging appointments for all of our customers. It saves both you and us time. With all of the requirements of the new farm bill this year, your visit will take longer than it has in previous years. If you make an appointment we will have everything we can ready for you in advance, minimizing your waiting time.

Walk-ins will be accepted on a first come - first served basis when there are no appointments scheduled. Producers with appointments will be given priority.

Crop Reporting Reminders

Remember that all crops must be indicated on the aerial photos provided by the office. You are welcome to pick them up in advance or call to have us mail them to you. You **must** include the crop, acreage, and planting dates for each strip/field. We will also need to know the intended use (ex: grain/silage) and if it is irrigated. Hay acreage and an approximate planting date are also required.

MILC & LDP Rates

To get the current MILC rate or the current LDP rates, please call the office at 717-272-3908 and dial extension 143. This will give you the most recently announced MILC rate, the daily LDP rates, and commodity loan repayment rates.

MILC payments are processed as soon as possible. The payment rates are announced at the end of the month following the month of production... that means May's MILC production will be paid sometime in July. Please be aware that with crop reporting deadlines approaching it may take us longer than usual to make the payments.

| Dates to Remember | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Continuous | Continuous Conservation Reserve Program |
| May 4 thru May 29, 2009 | Requests for Referendum for Soybean Promotion |
| June 15, 2009 | COC nominations period opens |
| Aug. 14, 2009 | 2009 ACRE election & signup deadline |
| Aug. 3, 2009 | Last day to file COC election nomination forms |
| Aug. 14, 2009 | DCP Signup Deadline |

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance programs. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202)-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."



June 2009

Northumberland FSA News

Northumberland County USDA Service Center

Northumberland County FSA

441 Plum Creek Road
Sunbury, PA 17801

570-286-7114 phone
570-286-6114 fax
www.fsa.usda.gov/pa

Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

County Committee

Alvin Shaffer, Chairperson
Roger Rovenolt, Vice-Chair
Orville Shultz, Member
Mary Crone, Advisor

Staff

Eugene Sweigard, CED
Sanae Poust, PT
Deborah Wilk, PT
JoAnn Robbins, PT

Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL)

Loans on new farm storage structures are available through your local FSA Office. Eligible structures include grain bins, silos, and handling equipment. To be eligible for these 7 year loans, you must have a need for additional storage and you must grow an eligible crop. A satisfactory credit history is required and you must demonstrate the ability to repay the debt. The interest rate for June 2009 is 2.625 percent. Contact your county office for additional details.

DCP Signup Extended

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FSA computes DCP Program payments using base acres and payment yields established for each farm. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. For 2009, you may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment for each commodity associated with the farm. FSA will issue advance direct payments later this month. Counter-cyclical payment rates vary depending on market prices and are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is statutorily set below its target price.

The electronic DCP (or eDCP) service will save you time, reduce paperwork and speed up contract processing at FSA offices. It is available to anyone eligible to participate in the DCP Program. To access this on-line service, you must have an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account, which requires filling out an online registration form at <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov> followed by a visit to the local USDA Service Center for identity verification.

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Not have been:

- Removed or disqualified from the office of county committee member, alternate or employee
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| Dates to Remember | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Continuous | Continuous Conservation Reserve Program |
| May 4 thru May 29, 2009 | Requests for Referendum for Soybean Promotion |
| June 15, 2009 | COC nominations period opens Last Day to report Small Grains (Wheat, Barley, Oats, Rye) |
| July 15, 2009 | Last Day to report remaining crops |
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| Aug. 14, 2009 | 2009 ACRE election & signup deadline |
| Aug. 14, 2009 | DCP Signup Deadline |

LAA(s) up for Election

| County Committee Elections | | |
|----------------------------|-----|--|
| County | LAA | Townships |
| Northumberland | 2 | Rush, Upper Augusta, Lower Augusta, Shamokin, Ralpho, Zerbe, Coal, Mt.Carmel & Rockefeller Twps. & Riverside Borough |

To read more about the 2009 County Committee elections, visit the Pennsylvania FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/pa.

REMINDER

Noxious weeds **MUST** be controlled on CRP, CREP and DCP ground. By not controlling these weeds it could be a violation of your contract that could result in penalties and termination of contracts.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance programs. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202)-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."



June 2009

Schuylkill County FSA News

Schuylkill County USDA Service Center

Schuylkill County FSA
1104 Ag Center Drive
Pottsville PA 17901

570-622-1555 phone
570-622-1555 fax
www.fsa.usda.gov/pa

Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

County Committee

James Hepler, Chairperson
John Halabura, Vice Chairperson
Daniel Troxell, Member
Dianne Hepler, Advisor

Staff

Terry L. Stehr, CED
Diane Y. Allison, PT
Christine Maccarone, PT
Sharon Moyer, PT
Steve Paul, Field Assistant
William Reichert, Field Assistant

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Producers with current pulse crop acre history in 1998 through 2001 will be notified of the opportunity to update pulse crop base acres to their farm using one of three options. Producers must also provide verifiable and acceptable production evidence to support the calculated average farm yield for each pulse crop. The deadline for pulse crop base acres and yield election is August 14, 2009.

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2009 County Committee Elections

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency county committees is important to ALL farmers and ranchers, whether beginning or long-established, with large or small operations. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

County committee members are a critical component of the operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers and ranchers who serve on county committees help with the decisions necessary to administer the programs in their counties. County committees provide local input on:

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- Incentive, indemnity and disaster payments for some commodities
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FSA county committees operate within official regulations to carry out federal laws. County committee members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions.

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Who Can Hold Office

To hold office a person must meet the basic eligibility criteria.

- Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA
- Be eligible to vote in a county committee election
- Reside in the LAA in which a candidate

Not have been:

- Removed or disqualified from the office of county committee member, alternate or employee
- Removed for cause from any public office or have been convicted of fraud, larceny, embezzlement or any other felony
- Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services.

LAA(s) up for Election

| County Committee Elections | | |
|----------------------------|-----|------------------|
| County | LAA | Townships |
| Schuylkill | 1 | Upper Mahantongo |
| | | Hubley |
| | | Porter |
| | | Pine Grove |
| | | Tremont |
| | | Hegins |
| | | Frailey |
| | | Eldred |
| | | Barry |
| | | Foster |
| | | Butler |

To read more about the 2009 County Committee elections, visit the Pennsylvania FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/pa.

Note that this area has been represented by Dairyman James Hepler for the past 9 years. Jim is not eligible to serve this area after 2009 so.... Please help us get a list of suitable candidates that you would like to represent your interests at the Farm Service Agency. Committee Members play a vital role in the administration of federal farm programs.

Conservation News

The Conservation Reserve Program lives on in Schuylkill County. Producers can offer land located adjacent to streams, rivers, ponds or Lakes for planting of a riparian buffer. This practice requires the area devoted to the buffer to be planted to trees and shrubs. Since this practice remains eligible for CREP or the enhanced version of CRP there are some very good reasons to enroll. 1. FSA provides cost sharing (50%) to install the buffer, including components such as fencing required to exclude cattle from the area. 2. The State of PA will also provide cost sharing in an amount equal to FSA in most cases. 3. FSA pays a practice incentive payment of 40% of all eligible expenses. 4. FSA provides participants with a signup incentive payment of \$100.00 for each acre of land enrolled in this practice. 5. FSA will pay annual rental payments on the land covered by the buffer for up to 15 years. FSA is convinced that the environmental benefits are profound on this practice and we think you will find the financial benefits useful as well.

Continuous signup for certain practices is open throughout the year. The practices eligible for enrollment include sod waterways, filter strips, and contour buffer strips. This program provides many of the benefits provided by the buffer practice shown above.

PA is also participating in the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement Program (SAFE). SAFE provides the establishment of vernal pools for wildlife, planting trees and shrubs to establish wildlife habitat, and planting native grasses to enhance environmental benefits. There are restrictions to the number of acres which may be enrolled under this program and the practices are designed to be applied to eligible cropland. If interested in enrolling in SAFE you should contact the County Office as soon as possible.

Congress has reduced the amount of acreage available for the Conservation Reserve Program throughout the Country. This means we will probably not see an open signup period for enrollments in 2009. If you have an expiring contract you may be offered an extension varying in length dependent on the environmental benefits provided.

If you have any questions about any of the information included in this letter please contact the County Office.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance programs. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202)-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."



June 2009

Snyder/Union FSA News

Snyder/Union County USDA Service Center

Snyder/Union County FSA
405 West Market St
Middleburg PA 17842

570-837-0007 or
570-524-2549 – phone
570-837-1038 - fax
www.fsa.usda.gov/pa

Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00 am – 4:30 pm

County Committee

Barry Waite
Lucas Criswell
Linda Fisher
Mark Mapes
Kenneth Shaffer

Staff

Mary Kiel, CED
Chip Weaver, FLM
Kathryn Colyer
Clint Smith
Tangee Dreisbach
Lin Prutzman
Karen Lauver
Diane Savidge
Diane Lloyd
Robert Letson, Field Assist.
Myron Shuck, Field Assist.

Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL)

Loans on new farm storage structures are available through your local FSA Office. Eligible structures include grain bins, silos, and handling equipment. To be eligible for these 7 year loans, you must have a need for additional storage and you must grow an eligible crop. A satisfactory credit history is required and you must demonstrate the ability to repay the debt. The interest rate for May 2009 is 2.375 percent. Contact your county office for additional details.

DCP Signup Extended

Signup for the 2009 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment (DCP) Program has been extended until August 14, 2009. FSA will not accept any late-filed applications.

FSA computes DCP Program payments using base acres and payment yields established for each farm. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. For 2009, you may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment for each commodity associated with the farm. FSA will issue advance direct payments later this month. Counter-cyclical payment rates vary depending on market prices and are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is statutorily set below its target price.

The electronic DCP (or eDCP) service will save you time, reduce paperwork and speed up contract processing at FSA offices. It is available to anyone eligible to participate in the DCP Program. To access this on-line service, you must have an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account, which requires filling out an online registration form at <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov> followed by a visit to the local USDA Service Center for identity verification.

ACRE Signup is Ongoing

The Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program signup began April 27, 2009, and runs through August 14, 2009. The ACRE alternative provides eligible producers a state-level revenue guarantee, based on the 5-year state Olympic average yield and the 2-year national average price.

Commodities eligible for ACRE payments are wheat, corn, grain sorghum, barley, oats, upland cotton, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, peanuts, soybeans, sunflower seed, canola, flaxseed, safflower, mustard seed, rapeseed, sesame seed, crambe, dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas and large chickpeas.

The ACRE program was created to give producers an option in lieu of traditional counter-cyclical payments. Producers may elect and enroll in ACRE for the 2009 crop year even if they have already accepted advance direct payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program.

GIS

As part of a program to digitally map the nation's farms and fields, the USDA has established the Common Land Unit (CLU) as a standardized GIS (Geographic Information Systems) data layer that has allowed mapping to be integrated easily on a nationwide basis. FSA manages this CLU data layer through a distributed database environment for all field service centers through out the country.

Transitioning to CLU certification has improved communication between Service Centers and FSA customers through the use of ortho-photography or NAIP (National Agricultural Imagery Program). Service Centers use NAIP imagery to maintain the Common Land Unit (CLU) boundaries and assist with a multitude of other farm programs.



Using GIS and GPS (Global Positioning System) provides for more consistent and more accurate land measurements, such as field acreage and acreage boundaries of conservation practices, such as riparian buffers. With high quality digital imagery, new land use changes (farm transfers and land subdivisions) can be easily updated. Maps can be created in either paper or digital format for FSA customers or the public. The GIS environment provides for the incorporation of data from outside sources for business decision making or environmental planning. Some examples of outside data sources include demographic data, satellite imagery, GPS data, elevation data and soil types.

More information about the CLU and NAIP imagery can be found by visiting on-line, APFO (Aerial Photography Field Office) at www.apfo.usda.gov.

Commodity Loans

Need money for operating expenses? You may use your harvested crop as collateral to obtain a 9-month loan. To be eligible for loan, you must have grown the crop and retain control of and title to the eligible commodity while the commodity is under loan. You are responsible for maintaining the quality and quantity of the commodity and obtaining permission from the county office prior to moving or selling the grain.

New Commodity Loan Repayment Rates

Since April 15, FSA began using an improved and more stable system for determining non-recourse marketing assistance loan repayment rates and loan deficiency payment rates for wheat, feed grains, pulse crops, oilseeds, wool, mohair and honey.

The new method reduces the effects daily market volatilities have on loan repayment rates, and provides more certainty for producers who have taken advantage of marketing assistance loans or loan deficiency payments.

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- Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services.

LAA(s) up for Election

| County Committee Elections | | |
|----------------------------|-----|--|
| County | LAA | Townships |
| Snyder | 1 | Monroe, Penn, Union Washington and Chapman Townships |
| Union | 4 | Lewis, Limestone, Buffalo and West Buffalo Townships |

To read more about the 2009 County Committee elections, visit the Pennsylvania FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/pa.

Farm Loan Program Information

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan Programs are available to farmers to purchase or operate family-size farms and ranches.

Farm ownership loan funds may be used to purchase or enlarge a farm, purchase easements or rights of way needed in the farm operation, erect or improve buildings such as a dwelling or barn, promote soil and water conservation and development and pay closing costs. Repayment terms for direct ownership loans can be as long as 40 years.

Farm operating loan funds may be used to purchase livestock, poultry, farm and home equipment, feed, seed, fuel, fertilizer, chemicals, hail and other crop insurance, food, clothing, medical care and hired labor. Funds also may be used to install or improve water systems for home use, livestock or irrigation and other improvements.

Repayment terms for direct operating loans depend on the collateral securing the loan and usually run from 1 to 7 years. Please contact the FSA office for current interest rates.

FSA also offers loan guarantees to eligible lenders to help local banks provide financing for farmers. Guaranteed loans also may be made for ownership or operating purposes. Typically, FSA guarantees 90 or 95 percent of a loan against any loss that might be incurred if the loan fails. Interest rates for guaranteed loans are established by the lender.

Persons who think they might be eligible are urged to contact the FSA county office.

FSA can make and guarantee loans to socially disadvantaged applicants to buy and operate family-size farms and ranches. Funds specifically for these loans are reserved each year. A socially disadvantaged farmer is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of the group without regard to their individual qualities. For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Hispanics and Asians and Pacific Islanders.

| Dates to Remember | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Continuous | Continuous Conservation Reserve Program |
| May 4 thru May 29, 2009 | Requests for Referendum for Soybean Promotion |
| June 15, 2009 | COC nominations period opens Small Grain reporting deadline |
| July 15, 2009 | Corn & Soybean report deadline |
| Aug. 14, 2009 | 2009 ACRE election & signup deadline |
| Aug. 3, 2009 | Last day to file COC election nomination forms |
| Aug. 14, 2009 | DCP Signup Deadline |

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